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Later that day we reached the coast at Castilletes. It was desert country there, dreary, full of sand-dunes and furrowed with salt water channels. There we came across an emaciated horse, a poor brute that had obviously strayed and was now desperately looking for water and grazing that did not exist. It stopped and drank sea-water. It must have been dying, and the kindest thing would have been to shoot it, but that could have cost us dear. The owner would have demanded unreasonable compensation. Instead, the Indians went to see what clan mark it had, so that they could report to their fellows in Castilletes. News spreads quickly among the Indians. The owner would not have much joy of his horse, for the hide could not be worth much, but he would learn where it was to be found.

Francisco got us to Castilletes easily. He had been there often before, even once on our behalf—to fetch gold, literally, for we were expecting a transfer of money from Caracas and it came in the form of gold, American, Venezuelan and Colombian gold and silver coinage circulated in Guajira, but the Indians would have nothing to do with notes.

There was, of course, a certain risk in conveying several hundred gold coins through Guajira from a slave-port like Castilletes, where there were plenty of shady characters. The money, however, was packed in boxes made for photographic plates and the same schooner from Maracaibo brought some packages for the monks, to whom our money was also addressed. The boxes interested neither Customs nor others. Francisco rode a wretched horse and had dressed in his worst jacket and a pair of indecently ragged trousers, so that he did not look as though he were carrying large sums on him, while his horse would not have tempted any thief. Thus, all had gone well, Francisco had not been nervous, though we had.

Castilletes was the only place on the south coast where white people lived and to which whites frequently came. Schooners from Venezuela put in there. The frontier between Colombia and Venezuela ran between the houses, of which there were about a dozen in those days. The sur-

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numerous and worse armed companies and take what they have. The various bands, however, have no mutual respect or consideration, but will plunder each other if they can. Perhaps a Guajiro with a relation among the attackers can count on some consideration, unless his relative is inimical. However, the Guajiro do sometimes do business with the Cusina, and also can negotiate and secure the return of stolen animals. The Cusina's haunt is the Cojoro Hills and a narrow strip of the lowland is also accounted theirs.' He then named the leaders of that time and told where they and their men were. In those days the Cusina had a number of plantations in the lowland, and also cattle, though they could not be bothered to look after these, but preferred to live by banditry. Simmons also says that it was the Cusina who sold the poisoned arrows.

Nearly forty years had passed since Simmons had journeyed in those parts and it was obvious that the Cusina were no longer so numerous nor so dominant, though one still had to take heed of them and be on one's guard. We were to learn that they could still make daring raids to parts far from their haunts. All unattached Indians one met in the vicinity of the hills were held to be Cusina—it was safest so.

Attack and highway robbery was one thing, ordinary theft another. If a thief was caught, it cost him dear in compensation, but theft itself, as we heard in connection with Chinca, was almost regarded as a sport. It was thus common for poor Indians at least to pinch things from those who were better off. We, of course, were considered very rich.

It was not to be wondered at if an Indian, having nothing to eat during the worst of the drought, appropriated a bit of this and that from those who were better off. If he knew that he would be able to repay it, it became a sort of loan, without the owner's permission.

Once, some Indians got in ahead of the monks when the time came to harvest the manioc at the mission's plantation in Macuira. When the monks came there with the mission's children to carry it home, all had gone. In the hope of preventing this happening again, the monks decided to com-

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plain to the civil authorities; but the government inspector at the coast just smiled and shook his head when they asked if he could do anything about it.

'The only advice I can give you is that you double your plantation next year. Then perhaps the crop will suffice both for you and the Indians.'

When a monk once reproached an Indian who worked at the mission for pilfering sugar, the Indian replied: 'But, father, every Indian steals!'

As Simmons thought, the Cusina are made up of the bad elements, those outcast from their clans. In the long run no clan can shield a member who commits all sorts of crimes. Some flee to the hills because they cannot pay compensation for someone they have killed, nor count on help from their clan, which perhaps is also without resources. Such people are real outcasts, for anyone can kill them without risk of their clan's exacting vengeance. These outcasts once took refuge in the most desolate hills of the peninsula, Sierra de Cusina, and ever since others have come to replenish their ranks. It was said that they also had women, either captured or runaways. Grazing and water were said to be scarce there. It was a desolate part and none disputed it with the Cusina. They had to live largely by plunder and robbery. They could only keep goats in their hills, so what cattle they rustled, they ate. They were keen to get arms. We were told that none then alive had ever seen a Cusina. They attacked by night and killed everyone. That, of course, was the old Guajiro way: let no one live who might conceivably exact vengeance.

The old accounts from the days of the conquest also mention Cusina, but they must have meant ordinary Guajiro Indians from the area of the Cusina Hills.

The brigands were supposed to have scouts out on the roads, who signalled to their comrades when they scented prey. They very seldom dared attack a well-armed company, as ours was. We three white people each had a gun or rifle and a pistol; and in reserve we had some of my cheap barter pistols. We equipped Francisco with a saloon pistol which had a long barrel and looked impressive. Then we